

VERSE VARIOUS

CHARLES
FRANCIS
POTTER





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VERSE VARIOUS

BY

CHARLES FRANCIS POTTER

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
CHRISTMAS, 1915

Charles Francis Potter

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VERSE VARIOUS

BY

CHARLES FRANCIS POTTER

THIS small volume is published with the view of preserving some of the verse which the author has been writing during the last few years. Most of it has been printed in magazines, but several pieces make their first appearance here. Acknowledgements are due to The Watchman, The Christian Work, The Christian Register, The Century Co., The Bucknell Mirror, and L'Agenda.

CHARLES FRANCIS POTTER

Edmonton, Alberta,
Christmas, 1915.

I.



VERSE VARIOUS

CHRISTMAS GREETING

Peace on earth; to men, good-will;
Ever let the message sound
At this happy time until
Christmas' simple pleasures fill
Ev'ry home the whole earth round.

IMMANUEL

A Christmas Hymn

Tune—Christmas, C.M.

We thank thee, Lord, that thou hast led
Us in the past so well,
That by thy hand we have been fed,
Our God, Immanuel.

We thank thee thou art with us now
In ev'ry good we try.
When we must toil with sweat of brow,
We love to feel thee nigh.

And in the days that are to come,
God bless the church we love,
Till thou at last shalt take us home
To be with thee above.

Christmas, 1909.

VERSE VARIOUS

A CALL TO PEACE

A CHRISTMAS ACROSTIC.

Come all ye Christians, ye heràlds of God,
Hearty and clear sound the message abroad.
Raise with hosannas your voices on high
Into the farthest blue depths of the sky.
Shout till your joy sets the church-bells aring:
Tell of the message that Christmas should bring,—
Men-of-good-will must make PEACE here below:
Agents of war and destruction and woe
Soon will depart when good men bid them go.

VERSE VARIOUS

A CHILD'S MORNING PRAYER

This morning, Father-God, I pray
That Thou wilt help me through the day
In all my work and all my play
In ev'rything I do or say
To act in just the kindest way.



A CHILD'S EVENING PRAYER

Father, keep me through the night
In the dark as in the light.
May all people ev'rywhere
Slumber in Thy loving care.
When the morning wakes again,
Keep me sweet all day. Amen.

VERSE VARIOUS

STILL LEAD ME ON

Still lead me on;
There lie before me many ways:
Alike they greet my baffled gaze,
Oh God, lead on!

Still lead me on;
No chance hath led my steps aright,
But Thou, through darkest day and night,
Hast led me on.

Still lead me on;
I feel Thy presence with me now:
By wondrous ways, I know not how,
Thou dost lead on.

Still lead me on;
Since in the past I have been led,
The days to come I will not dread;
Thou wilt lead on.

Sept. 7, 1907.

VERSE VARIOUS

LITTLE MADELINE

God loaned to us a rosebud sweet,
 A flow'ret rare;
 And in our care
The wee bud grew in our love's heat.

She made us think of heav'nly things,
 Of God above,
 His tender love,
And all the sweet peace that it brings.

But 'ere we knew how much we cared
 For her dear ways,
 To our amaze,
We found we'd lost what once we'd shared.

For, 'spite our pray'rs, some great strong Hand
 Our rose-tree shook,
 Our rose-bud took
From out our sight to some fair land.

And though we're blind by many a tear,
 We thank the Power
 Who took our flower
That He has left it's fragrance here.

1909.

VERSE VARIOUS

MEASURELESS LOVE

So large, they say, the love
 Of Him who rules above
 To each a share may fall:
But, like the children here,
 To earthly father dear,
 Can each not have it all?

1907.

THE ACCEPTED TIME

Chances missed are lost forever:
 Opportunities once past
Come again to meet us never:
 Tempus Pater travels fast.
Lest remorse should be your neighbor,
 When white hair is on your brow,
In this golden moment labor;
 Heed the motto, "Do it now."

1911.

VERSE VARIOUS

THE PAGE OF LIFE

"Life is a sheet of paper white
On which we each of us may write
A line or two, and then comes night,"
So runs the verse.

But while we each with each condole,
And waves of sadness round us roll,
Let this one thought our hearts console,
It might be worse.

Suppose the paper wasn't white;
Suppose we were required to write
A billion words or so, at sight,
Would that be better?

And then again I have opined,
It surely should relieve one's mind
To know the Addressee is kind
Who reads the letter.

October 1912.

VERSE VARIOUS

THE NAME OF GOD

Of old, man knelt before a God whose name
Was Pow'r; who held the reins of heav'n and earth
In hand capricious. Then there came a time
When man gave God a court, called him The Just.
And bowed to "Eye for eye and tooth for tooth."
But God laid down the reins and gavel both
And sent his son to say that God is Love.

1909.

SUCCESS

To win success, what is it, pray?
Is man's work done when earth he leaves?
Did Christ look victor on that day
When on the cross between the thieves?

1909.

VERSE VARIOUS

THE MEETING

His ship sailed east; my boat went west.
Each of us felt within his breast,
 "His search is not like mine."
He for the truly human sought;
My quest had for its single thought,
 The perfectly divine.

Years passed, I thought my search in vain
Until I met my friend again
 And heard him say to me,
"We on the self-same errand ran:
In that he was a perfect man
 Lay Christ's divinity."

1909.

VERSE VARIOUS

THE VALUE OF OPPOSITION

Contention strengthens a notion.

Oppression makes rebels strong.

When a hoop once is in motion,

Smiting but helps it along.

Persecute whom you'd make hero:

What one defends he holds dear.

Burned not the torches of Nero,

Christ and His Word were not here.

VERSE VARIOUS

THE VILLAGE CARPENTER

A sycamore stood by the door
And when the sun was high,
The children played within its shade
And watched the shavings fly.

The man within was tall and thin,
But strong and full of grace;
His eyes would smile the livelong while
And light a winsome face.

From year to year without a tear
Those eyes shone bright with love,
And children thought their blue was brought
From Heaven's dome above.

But one sad day they passed that way
And saw their loving friend
With troubled eyes; and, in surprise,
They sought his grief to end.

He dried the tear and calmed their fear
And kissed each rosy cheek,
And said, "To-day I go away
For many a long, long week."

They said, "No, no, why should'st thou go?
Stay here beneath the tree."
"Oh, children dear, there is, I fear,
Another tree for me."

VERSE VARIOUS

"Who'll saw the oaks and make the yokes
And shape the farmer's plow?"
"Someone there'll be to work for thee,
But I must leave thee now."

"Alack! alack! Thou'lt ne'er come back:
Thy face we ne'er shall see."
He smiled and said, "Perhaps, instead,
Thou wilt come home to me.

"So do not grieve. If I must leave,
We'll love each other still,
And by and by thou'lt learn, as I,
It is the *Father's* will."

1913.

VERSE VARIOUS

THE ANSWER

I looked for the message of Easter.
In thought, as my Bible I read,
I followed the sorrowing women,
That dawn when they went to their dead.

I asked them the message of Easter
As, wond'ring, they came from the cave.
They hurried away to the city,
And never an answer they gave.

Then toward me labored two runners;
I think they were Peter and John.
Their faces were haggard and anxious:
Before I could speak they were gone.

All day in the mystified city
I questioned again and again.
The news they all told, "He is risen,"
Ignoring my query, "What then?"

Two men from Emmaus I halted,
That night as they cityward sped.
They told me how they had seen Jesus,
That he was alive from the dead.

But when I still asked for the message,—
What meant his defeat of the tomb,—
They said, "We must hasten." I followed
And came to a large upper room.

VERSE VARIOUS

They would not allow me to enter:
 My ear I put close to the door.
Within, many persons were talking.
 I lingered, in hope to learn more.

But soon in their eager narrations
 There came, of a sudden, a pause.
Not one made a sound as I listened,
 And wondered what could be the cause.

And then came the real Easter message;
 At last my inquiring might cease;
For out of the questioning silence
 I heard a sweet voice saying, "PEACE!"

1906.

VERSE VARIOUS

THE CHILD ANGEL

Over the edge of the cloud I peep,
Smiling at you below.
What is it, mother, that makes you weep:
Why are you crying so?

Up in this new place I don't feel sick:
Doctor won't come to-day.
Lift up your head, mother, look up quick.
Listen to what I say.

Mother, I love you, dear. Loud I call;
Tell you to look up high.
Somehow you don't seem to hear at all:
Could if you wouldn't cry.

1911.

VERSE VARIOUS

IT MUST BE FOR THE BEST

(An incident of the Franco-Prussian War.)

At last the dread conscription
Reached rustic St. Pierre:
The news, when read in chapel,
Made consternation there.

From fourteen up to sixty,
Each male to war must go.
France needed ev'ry musket
To fight the Prussian foe.

That night in saddened households
The fond good-byes were said;
And sounds of stifled sobbing
Came from the lately wed.

In one snug little cottage
Beside the village street,
The mother held her baby,
While, in a nearby seat.

A boy whose face seemed manly,
His years were ten and four,
Sat thinking of the future
And what it held in store.

VERSE VARIOUS

His mother dropped her knitting
And held his hand awhile:
He, though his heart was breaking,
Yet tried to wear a smile.

"Don't worry, mother dearest.
It must be for the best
That dad and I are drafted,
And must go with the rest."

The words were said with effort,
Then one big sob of grief.
Than tears, what else in sorrow
Gives physical relief?

The mother soon was weeping
And from the father's cheek
Was brushed a tear; they must not
See him, the father, weak.

Full long they talked, till midnight
Had burned the candle down,
And silence, deep and lonely,
Had settled on the town.

* * * * *

'Twas morning in the village.
The men must march that day
And be before the nightfall
A score of miles away.

VERSE VARIOUS

The boy of fourteen summers
Should bear the flag, they said,
And march beside his father,
The drummer, at the head.

Of that small band of conscripts
Who arm in arm, behind,
Went stumbling down the roadway,
For tears had made them blind.

They reached the drummer's cottage.
He paused, as did his son;
But said the stern, strange captain,
"March on, you lazy one."

So for the son and father
Was but one last long gaze.
That picture in the doorway
Was with them many days,

That picture in the doorway,
The mother and the child,
That mother, who, though anguished,
Still choked the sob, and smiled.

* * * * *

The men are placed for battle,
All ready for the fight.
There, Prussians; here, the Frenchmen,
Who've marched the whole long night.

VERSE VARIOUS

All still; and then a rumble.

“The Prussians charge! Advance!”

And brave to meet the onset,

Rush on the sons of France.

Way up among the front ranks

A Frenchman bravely drums.

He cheers the men; but at him

A burly Prussian comes.

He surely now will falter,

But no. Ah! Now, he's down!

And for the color-bearer

The Prussian, with a frown,

Is rushing. Heaven save him,

He's but a boy! And now

The Prussian sabre flashes

And mars that fair white brow.

The flag is seized: its bearer

Stops, staggers, falls, but see,

He rises, weak but dauntless,

And rests upon his knee.

The men of France are falt'ring.

They cannot hear the drum.

The sticks that should be beating

Are clasped in fingers numb.

VERSE VARIOUS

But hark! In accents cheery
Above the din they rise,
Those drum-beats urging "Onward!"
Fears change to glad surprise;

For there in kneeling posture,
With all his might and main,
The drummer's son, the flag-boy,
Drums "Charge!" and "Charge!" again.

With three cheers for the drummer,
The Frenchmen charge the foe,
And from them flee the Prussians
Like leaves when fierce winds blow.

And now the fight is over;
For France 'tis victory:
But where is he who gained it?
Yes, where, indeed, is he?

Still faintly beating "Onward!"
Close by his father's side,
All bloody, weak, and gasping,
The drummer's son had died.

The wounded father told them,
While in the surgeon's tent,
Told how his boy had kissed him;
How, just before he went,

VERSE VARIOUS

He talked of home, and mother,
The baby, and the rest;
How tender his last words were,
"It must be for the best."

1899.

II.

VERSE VARIOUS

THE BLUSH

I stand in awe before her love for me:
It is a mighty, elemental thing.
It permeates her ev'ry little move
When I am near. A woman's stern reserve
Bids her deny it and her feelings hide,
But yet in vain. The bounding, leaping tide
O'erflows the dikes by man and time built up;
Red-torrented heart's blood it pours, and near
Breaks through the tender skin of face and throat
Where crimson glows the happy, bashful flush.

1905.

VERSE VARIOUS

THE QUATRAIN

Along this creek one finds in spring
The sweet arbutus where it trails;
Or, if his search for flowers fails,
He hears the sweetest song-birds sing.
1906, Lewisburg, Pa.

ABSENCE

Parting gives pain; yet at parting
Warm lips make the anguish less keen:
But what can allay the heart's smarting
When far-stretching miles intervene?

VERSE VARIOUS

THE BENT SPRUCE

Beside the Skatchewanna's rapid flow,
Against a bluff cut steep in ages past,
There grew a small spruce sapling, hugging close,
Well sheltered in his niche from stormy blast.

Content he grew for half a decade there,
As straight as any sapling in the vale;
Then bolder felt, and thought himself so strong
That he no longer need beware the gale.

Relying on his vigor and his strength,
He bent his tip and from the cliff inclined:
He boldly reached out where the breezes blew,
And proudly scorned the niche he left behind.

One summer, two, and three, alone he grew,
And wondered he had been content so long
To stay where freedom was a thing unknown.
"I need no help," said he, "for I am strong."

Full early flew the south-bound birds that fall:
The thick-furred fox down deeper dug his den.
With winter came fierce storms that shook the
spruce
And wrenched his sturdy limbs away. And when

VERSE VARIOUS

The spring came back, with birds and buds and
warmth

And floods that swelled the vellow waters high,
The spruce again his needled tip bent back
And gladly found the shielding wall was nigh.

The sapling grew for years, and still it grows
Where winds the stream through broad Alberta's
land;

No sapling now, a tree with great bowed trunk,
As if it had been bent by Cyclop's hand.

VERSE VARIOUS

OLD MAN MOUNTAIN

Prone upon Colin's mighty range,
Thy giant face hath scanned the sky
A million years without a change,
A million years with steadfast eye.

The Athabaska's yellow stream
Is ages old to such as we;
And yet its primal rush must seem
A thing of yesterday to thee.

What hast thou seen, oh mighty friend,
Within the ages that are gone,
The countless times that heaven's bend
Hath brightened with the rosy dawn?

How many years did Nature take
In chiselling the gorge Maligne?
The liquid opal, Edith's lake,
Whence came its iridescent sheen?

What wilt thou see, oh silent one,
Within the centuries to be,
When moon and star and shining sun
Shall whisper secrets new to thee?

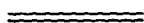
Jasper Park, 1915.

III.

VERSE VARIOUS

HELEN THE GREAT

There was a young Helen of Troy
Whose sweet tooth no candy could cloy:
 She ate, and she ate,
 Till, sad to relate,
She's Helen of Avoirdupois!



PETER THE PROUD

We have a bright kitten named Pete
Whose cleverness cannot be bete:
 He cut up a caper
 Upon some fly-paper
And now is stuck up at the fete.

VERSE VARIOUS

MR. ARTHUR DOX'S CLOSED SUNDAY

Now this man Arthur Dox, Esquire, was very,
very "good."

That is, he quite refused at times to do the things
he should,

For fear that in the doing so he might be led to sin,
And when he reached the pearly gates they might
not let him in.

His very special hobby was the Holy Sabbath Day.
He stood for its observance in the strictest sort of
way:

His children dared not whistle and his roosters
feared to crow

And Sundays in his garden patch his turnips
dassent grow!

The neighbors' Sabbath "goings-on" moved Dox
with holy pity;

He soon felt called to elevate the morals of his
city.

He claimed that Sunday work of any kind "should
not be did,"

That on that day there should descend the tightest
kind of lid.

VERSE VARIOUS

The days of miracles are gone, but, passing strange
to say,

The very thing he prayed for came to pass one
Sabbath day.

When Dox came down to breakfast, to eat, as he
supposed,

A friend called up by telephone and said, "This
Sunday's closed!"

"Hurrah," cried Dox, "the right has won, and now
I'll break my fast."

He waited long for his oatmeal, and called the
maid at last.

She did not come, and in the kitchen cold he found
a letter,

"Dear Sir," it said, "this kitchen's closed. I hope
you like it better."

"Oh well," he said, while foraging for grub upon
the shelf,

"It's not so bad; I'll hurry round and get some
food myself."

But when he looked for milk and cream, his breast
in wrath he smote,

For all there was upon the step was just another
note.

VERSE VARIOUS

"Dear Sir," it said, "we're sorry, but the law is strict and straight:

On Sunday's now no milk we leave at anybody's gate."

Dox shut the door, and I don't know but what it was a slam,

And said a word below his breath that sounded like a damn.

A grouchy Mr. Dox it was who started off to church;

And once again he found himself most sadly in the lurch:

The trolley-cars were late, in fact they didn't come at all,

So Dox was forced to hoof it to his sacred meeting-hall.

The audience was on the steps; a note was on the door.

The janitor was sorry, but he "couldn't work no more."

The officers had told him that if they ever saw Him working on the Sabbath they would sure enforce the law.

VERSE VARIOUS

But someone broke a window, which must have
been a sin,
And went around inside and let the freezing people
in.
The minister began to preach, and to his flock he
told
Of "Hell and Sure Damnation," and they didn't
feel so cold.

Before he fair was started, though, in quite
dramatic style
An officer in uniform came down the center aisle
And said in tones of thunder in the stillness of the
kirk,
"By order of the king, desist, for this is surely
work."

As with the others Dox, our friend, went slowly
out the door,
Much meeker and much wiser than he ever was
before,
He thought he fell upon the step and sadly bumped
his head;
But waked and found his nightmare wild had
kicked him out of bed.

1914.

VERSE VARIOUS

WITHOUT A CHAPERON

She went one day to college
Did Miss Sophia Stone
With quantities of baggage, but
Without a chaperon.

Her age was—over twenty:
She thought herself quite grown:
She didn't know she couldn't go
Without a chaperon.

One day she went out walking.
She started out alone
But met a friend and walked with him
Without a chaperon.

The matron heard about it,
And "sat on" Sophy Stone
For walking with a horrid man
Without a chaperon.

Poor Sophy cried and ran to
The room she called her own,
And vowed that never would she go
Without a chaperon.

That night the "Sem" was burning:
The flames on Sophy shone:
She thought she'd reached the other place
Without a chaperon.

VERSE VARIOUS

A youth climbed through the window
To save Miss Sophy Stone.
"Kind sir," she said, "I dare not go
Without a chaperon."

In vain he tried to save her;
She could but shriek and moan,
And so they died together there
Without a chaperon!

VERSE VARIOUS

EXITS

They "kick the bucket" when they die
From football injuries at Yale:
They're not so rude at Harvard, but
Politely "pass beyond the pale."



A SUBURBANITE'S HEAVEN

I would not take my "chamber in the silent halls
of death,"
When life upon this earth for me shall cease;
I'd like to go on whistling when I catch my second
breath,
And raise a little garden-stuff upon the Plains of
Peace.

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